



Sound In Microsoft Products

"Function first"

Steve Ball and Benjamin Bethurum
Microsoft's Sound V-Team



Steve Ball

Windows Experience Team: Devices and Media
Senior Program Manager Lead

Benjamin Bethurum

Windows Mobile : Mobile Communications Experience (MCX)
User Experience Designer | UX Sound Designer

What's in a name...

So

Agenda

agenda

defining
Source

When is silence truly golden?

"Silence *is* golden if sound events outweigh the information they are presenting to the end user.

Sounds can be very annoying...

Sounds must function-first and have a purpose or definitive need.

Sound 's...

"Sound is Expressive, informational, invisible and ubiquitous. Sound is a integral part of our daily lives. Sound is the voice of our everyday tools, appliances, and electronics. Sound creates an emotional bond between us and our inanimate products."

Today's world is saturated with "sonic icons" conveying a spectrum of information which describe our everyday events.

More and more of our products need sound...
And the product teams are pinging us



Purposes for Sounds in Products

Purposes for sound in products

The five basic purposes

Brand

associated
from
with
you

Sound Branding : Sonic Logo Examples



Purposes for sound in products

The five basic purposes

Feel

using
con





Purposes for sound in products

The five basic purposes

Not

an int
use
the
the

Notification Examples



Purposes for sound in products

The five basic purposes

Sound

orchestra
with
initial
sens
desk

Purposes for sound in products

The five basic purposes

5 Enter
Sound
texture
dive
othe





Branding

- Start Up Sounds
- Shut Down Sounds
- Ring Tones

Feedback

- Volume Up
- Volume Down
- On/Off

Notifications

- Meeting Reminder
- Text Message
- IM Nudge

Sonification

- Window Pop ups

Entertainment

- Placeholder Music
- Training Videos
- Hold Music

a quick

Sound Exercise...





How to *Talk* About Sound



Melody

The prominent voice of the sound.

The most audible layer of the sound.

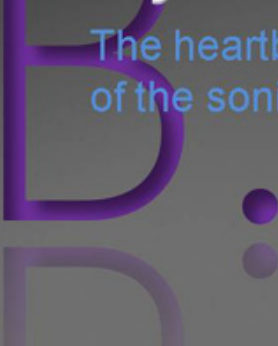
The component you would actually hum.





Rhythm

The heartbeat, pulse or cadence
of the sonic icon.





Coloration

The orchestration or “timbre” of the sound.

The instrumentation and overall scaffolding of the sonic icon.



Density

The weight of the sound.

The “brightness and contrast” of the overall sound.



Principles for sound design

The desktop case



1. Sounds should be composed mostly of mid-range and high frequencies
2. Sounds should be relatively short
3. Sounds should be soft, low in volume
4. Sounds should convey meaning naturally
5. Sounds should be pleasant

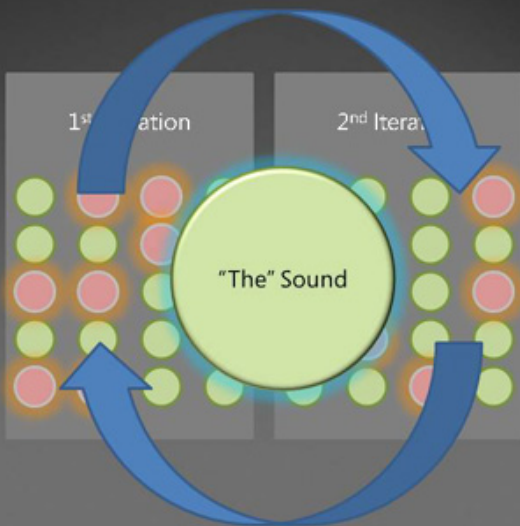
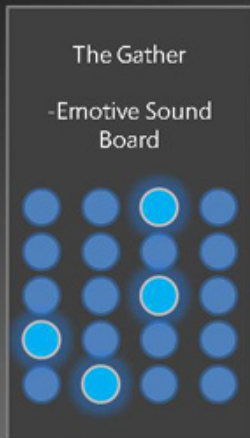


6. Sounds should not be alarming, distressing, or urgent.
7. Speech should be used cautiously.
8. No sound should ever repeat more than 2 to 3 times in a row.
9. Frequent sounds should evolve over time.
10. All sounds for a particular app should feel like they are part of a family.

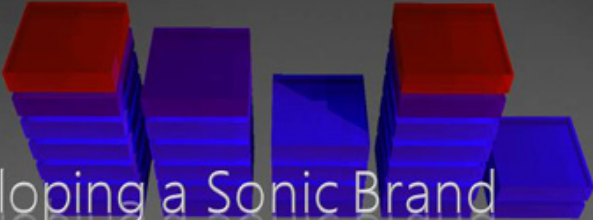


The Process of Sound Design







An abstract 3D graphic featuring several rectangular blocks. On the left, a stack of four blue blocks is topped with a red block. In the center, there is a single blue block. To its right is another single blue block. Further right is another stack of four blue blocks topped with a red block. On the far right, there is a single blue block. The blocks are arranged on a reflective surface, creating a subtle reflection below them. The background is a dark gray gradient.

Developing a Sonic Brand

History: Evolution of the Windows Startup sound



Windows 95: eno



Windows 98: ken kato



2000: ken kato



XP: soundeluxe



MCE: soundeluxe

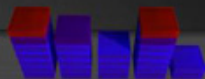


History: Windows Vista Startup Sound

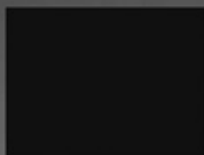


Handwritten musical notation for the Windows Vista startup sound. It consists of two staves. The top staff is labeled "FRIPP MELODY" and shows an ascending melodic line with four notes (G4, A4, B4, C5) and a fermata over the final note. The bottom staff is labeled "Rhythm" and shows a sequence of notes marked with 'x' to indicate rhythm. The text "WIN-DOWS - VISTA" is written below the bottom staff. To the right of the notation, the text "AM = GLISSANDO" is written.

- Four notes = (four colors in Vista flag)
- Ascending = (positive, uplifting)
- Distinct: AERO principles



Pearl Animation: Context is Everything...



Sound is emotive!

Implementing great sound can push a product from practical to emotional!





The Virtual Sound Team



Why a sound V-Team?

Our ultimate goal is to make sure Microsoft products *sound* great!
We want to make sure we do it right across Microsoft.

- Strengthen and support Microsoft's sonic identity in our current and future products.
- Design, leverage, manage, and make our sound resources visible and available to product teams.
- Encourage product teams to adopt Microsoft's sonic language and innovate accordingly.



What we can do for you

- Help you define, design, implement, and test sound in your product
- Align your sound design to Microsoft's sonic brand
- Save your team time and money



What we have supported in the past...

- MSN 2.5 ("Hartford")
- Asheron's Call
- Chrome
- Win98 and Win98 PlusPak (18 sound schemes)
- Neptune
- Windows Mobile 6.0
- Xbox360 Wireless Headset (Prototyping)



What we are supporting today...

- Windows Vista
- Windows 7.0
- Windows Mobile 6.0
 - Extended Audio Packages
 - Themes, WMOC Ring Tones
- Office 14
- Response Point (MSR-Edinburgh)
- Zune



What we are supporting tomorrow...

- PowerPoint (Office 14)
- Live Messenger (Signature Sounds)
- PopFly
- Keyboard Team
- Windows 7.0 : Expanded Sound Schemes

- Your product...?



Call to action:

- Be smart: learn the process and language of sound design
- Contact us: even if you plan to outsource your sound design
 - SteveBal
 - BenBeth



Questions?